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Weapons Case Millionaire Shot to Death in California

FRESNO, Calif., June 10 (UPI)—William E. Thoresen III, 32, a millionaire once convicted of possessing a huge arsenal of military weapons cached around San Francisco Bay, was shot and killed today. Police were questioning his wife.

Officials at St. Agnes Hospital said Thoresen was dead on arrival with "multiple chest wounds." Police said his wife Louise, 32, called an ambulance.

Thoresen, son of the president of Chicago's Great Western Steel Co., won a court victory in San Francisco the day he was killed.

A federal appeals court sent the convictions of both Thoresen and his wife on federal gun possession charges back to U.S. District Court for further hearings.

In 1967, law enforcement officers picked up an arsenal of weapons including mobile cannon and antiaircraft guns from Thoresen's San Francisco mansion and other locations around the Bay area.

Thoresen maintained he was a gun collector and the weapons were not to be used, despite widespread rumors he had shadowy connections with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The couple had been living in a modest Fresno home while appealing the conviction.

The discovery of the 77-ton hoard of arms in 1967 caused speculation that it was to be used for some conspiratorial purpose. Thoresen said he simply liked to collect guns.

His wife was arrested during the raid at the mansion in the Pacific Heights section of San Francisco April 21, 1967, but Thoresen had disappeared. He surrendered at the U.S. marshal's office in San Francisco five days later after learning of his wife's arrest.

Thoresen had had other brushes with the law, including a conviction in Maine, when he was 20, for stealing Canadian National Railway travel posters from the walls of a ferry terminal building.

Later in 1967, Thoresen was arrested in Las Vegas on charges of beating a 31-year-old blonde and trying to bribe two sheriff's deputies to hush it up.

WM. E. THORENSEN III
. . . slain in California